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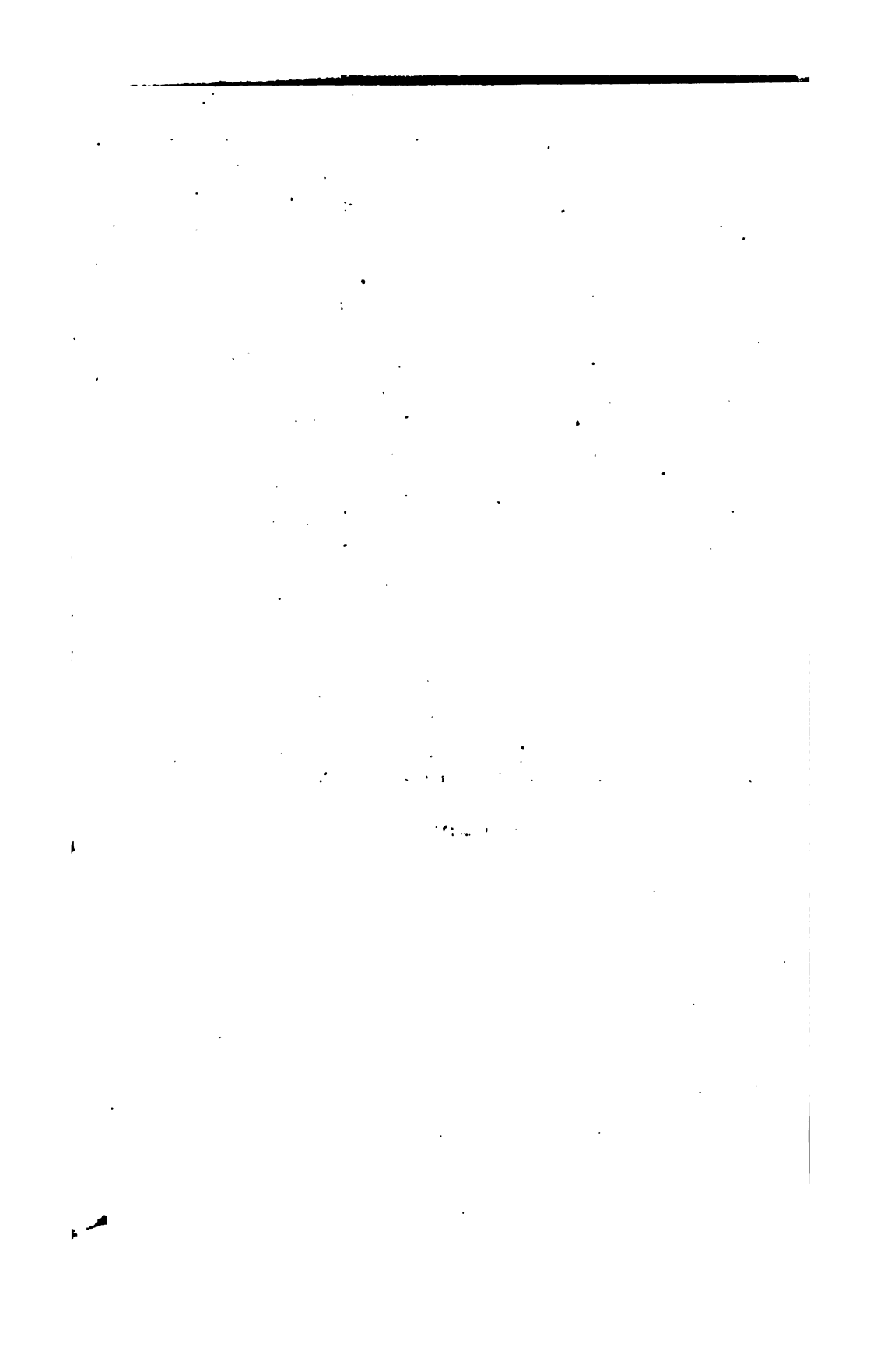
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**INTRIGUE:**  
**A COMIC INTERLUDE,**

**IN ONE ACT.**

**AS NOW PERFORMED AT**

**The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.**

---

**By JOHN POOLE, Esq.**  
*Author of Hamlet Tragedie, &c.*

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**LONDON:**

**PRINTED FOR JOHN MILLER, 25, BOW STREET,  
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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*The plot of INTRIGUE is of French origin ; but it has been so varied, to adapt it to the English stage, that it retains but few traces of its original. The characters, such as they are, are different ; and the dialogue has been entirely re-written.*

*The extraordinary indulgence with which this piece was received on its first representation, must, in a great degree, be attributed to the spirited manner in which it was acted : and I trust the Gentlemen, to whose exertions I profess myself indebted, will not think it invidious if I particularly mention MISS KELLY (the only Lady in the piece) and express my obligations to her for a performance, as useful to me as it has been creditable to herself.*

J. P.

London,  
April 28, 1814.



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

---

CAPTAIN RAMBLETON,

*Mr. French.*

VARNISH,

*Mr. De Camp.*

TOM,

*Mr. Knight.*

ELLEN,

*Miss Kelly.*

\* \* The Reader is requested to observe, that several passages  
(of too little importance for more particular notice) are  
omitted in the representation.

# INTRIGUE.

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## SCENE,

*A Room at an Inn on the Bath road. A door on each side, opening into separate Apartments,—one the “Wolf,” the other the “Fox.”*

*Enter TOM, followed by ELLEN.*

*Tom.* IT does not signify talking, Ellen, my dear, you shan't serve in the Bar, so there's an end on't.

*Ellen.* Why lord, Thomas, where's the harm? I'm sure it is a matter of no consequence.

*Tom.* Then why do you make such a fuss about it?

*Ellen.* Because——

*Tom.* Because, what?

*Ellen.* Because I don't like to sit moping all day in a little back room where I can see nobody.

*Tom.* Where nobody can see you;—I'm afraid that's nearer your meaning.

*Ellen.* No, indeed it is not: but my time will hang so heavily.

*Tom.* You must not expect to lighten it at my expense.—No, no; I've lived long enough in London to understand the tricks of the idle fellows who lounge about coffee houses and taverns, when there happens to be a pretty woman in the bar: they expect her to make love and punch at the same time, and to look sweet while she squeezes a lemon.

*Ellen.* Then I'm sure you may trust me to mind the bar, for I cannot make punch fit to drink.

*Tom.* Come, that's one reason.

*Ellen.* And, as for squeezing a lemon, the very sight of one draws my mouth into a hundred shapes.

*Tom.* Say no more about it Ellen, my dear: I've made up my mind upon it; and as we were married but yesterday, I think it's too soon to begin quarrelling to-day.

*Ellen.* And, indeed, I think it too soon to begin to be jealous to-day.

*Tom.* Jealous! you mistake me, my dear; I am not jealous, but prudent. Jealousy is out of the question: for though you are the prettiest woman in the village——

*Ellen.* O, Thomas——

*Tom.* You know I speak to you for the best. Our house being on the high road to Bath, a great many travellers stop here; and if you were much in the bar, as you are but a young giddy looking girl, the impudent fellows from London might be apt to take liberties with you.—Believe me, I didn't live two years as servant to Captain Rambleton, in London, for nothing. I know the ways of the town pretty well.

*Ellen.* Captain Rambleton! O, the fine gentleman you have told me of?

*Tom.* Fine gentleman! why, bless you, the race of fine gentlemen has been extinct at least half a century. The man of fashion of the present day is any thing but a fine gentleman; he is a buck, a blood, a dashing splash, or a tight kiddy; and instead of receiving his last finical touches in the drawing room, he is turned out complete from the stable. His resort is shifted from Ranelagh to the Fives Court; his language changed from small French, to St. Giles's slang; and his companions are, not the poets and the wits, but stage-coachmen and boxing coal-heavers.

*Ellen.* And is Captain Rambleton one of these?

*Tom.* Not so highly finished, though he has his merit. He keeps curricles, and he keeps horses, and he keeps—other animals; in short, like a true blood, he keeps every thing but his promise.

*Ellen.* Why did you leave him?

*Tom.* His place grew too hard for me.

*Ellen.* I thought he was a bachelor.

*Tom.* Yes, a *sort* of a bachelor; that is to say, he had no regular wife: but such bachelors are the most troublesome people in the world to live with; and I'd rather be in a noisy married family, where there is *one* mistress and a dozen children, than live with a quiet bachelor without children, to be at the command of a dozen mistresses.

*Ellen.* Then when you grew tired of that life you came to be waiter here—at the Horns.

*Tom.* Yes, but waiter now no longer; yesterday I married my Ellen, and to-day her mother has made me master of the concern.

*Ellen.* Yes, mother always promised you the Horns when you married me.

*Tom.* Eh! Ah! Now go into the little back

INTRIGUE :

parlour, my dear ; and don't be looking out of window, or minding the travellers ; but darn the stockings and make the dumplings, like a good sort of a wife,

*Ellen.* Now I know you are jealous.

*Tom.* No, my dear.

*Ellen.* A little.

*Tom.* No, my love.

*Ellen.* Well, any thing to please, my dear Thomas.

[*Exit.*

*Tom.* O bless you. She has the best heart and the sweetest temper in the world, and I think she loves me dearly ; but she is very pretty, and something of a coquette : however, as she is a good deal in the way of temptation here, 'tis fortunate she is not a prude. At all events, 'tis my duty to look closely after her.

*Ramb. (without)* House ! waiter ! house, I say !

*Tom.* Eh ! why, as I live, 'tis my old master, Captain Rambleton.

*Varn. (without)* Hollo ! house, house !

*Tom.* And his modest friend, Mr. Varnish. I know him of old—a sly dog. You'd think him a saint, and yet I've found him out in such pranks ! This way, gentlemen, this way, if you please.

*Enter RAMBLETON and VARNISH.*

*Ramb.* Zounds ! are the people here asleep, or dead !

*Tom.* No, sir, but wide awake and kicking alive, at your service.

*Ramb.* Eh! why surely it is he.

*Var.* Your old servant Tom.

*Tom.* The same, sir; Thomas Brisk, formerly in the honorable but unprofitable employment of Edward Rambleton Esquire, Captain of Artillery.

*Ramb.* Why, Tom, what brought you here?

*Tom.* Repentance, sir, and the Bath waggon.

*Ramb.* Repentance, you canting scoundrel! and pray what motive had you for repentance?

*Tom.* I lived two years with you, sir; and you know what a life we led.

*Ramb.* We led?

*Tom.* Don't be angry, sir. The truth is, that after quitting your service I tried to get into some steady, quiet family; but unluckily having a good character from you, nobody would take me; so finding it impossible to settle to my mind in London, I returned here to my native village, where I hope to end my days in a becoming manner.

*Ramb.* Wisely resolved, indeed.

*Tom.* Now, sir, may I make bold to enquire what brings you here.

*Ramb.* The same thing, Tom—repentance.

*Tom.* I'm glad to hear that, sir; for if you had come upon the old business—you understand—you'd have found the women as shy as linnets, and the men dead good hands at single-stick.

*Ramb.* Ah! my giddy days are now at an end; I'm on my way to—Repentance.

*Tom.* How, Sir!

*Varn.* He's going to be married.

*Tom.* How; married!

*Ramb.* You know I've often promised.

*Tom.* Aye; twenty women to my knowledge.

*Varn.* There's no jest in it now, Tom. He has

at length profited by my advice, and remonstrances ; thrown aside all his follies, determined to sacrifice himself to matrimony, and it is I who am appointed to place the victim upon the altar.

*Tom.* Then allow me, Sir, to offer you my compliments——

*Ramb.* Of condolence ?

*Tom.* Why that's as it may be hereafter. But is it indeed true ? Or is it a marriage in your old style ?

*Ramb.* Once more I tell you I am serious. My finances are not in the most flourishing state ; a rich marriage is the only means left me of replenishing my exchequer, and I am now in my way to Bath, where to-morrow, to use the newspaper formula, I shall have the happiness of leading to the Altar, Araminta Griskin, the lovely and accomplished daughter of Timothy Griskin, Esquire, formerly of Clare Market, carcase butcher. O curse it !

*Tom.* Poor gentleman ! Ah, Sir, I remember when you were the life and spirit of all the men, and the ruin of half the women wherever you went ; but now ——

*Ramb.* " Othello's occupation's gone."

*Tom.* And are *you* married, Sir ? (*To VARNISH*)

*Varn.* O, no, Tom ; I'm too steady to marry. I recommended marriage to my friend Rambleton as a curb to his volatile disposition ; but for myself, who am of a more subdued temperament, and blest with more chastened habits, I remain as you always knew me.

*Tom.* (*aside*) As I always knew him ! does he mean to be sarcastic upon himself ?

*Ramb.* And, pray Tom, have *you* ever thought of—taking unto yourself a wife?

*Tom. (aside)* Shall I trust them?—No, I'd better not.—A wife? O, no, Sir.—I can't afford it.

*Ramb.* Not that you'd have any thing to fear from us, if you had;—for, as my friend's morals are as severe as usual——

*Varn.* And as my friend is on the point of marriage——

*Tom.* True.

*Ramb.* You could have nothing to apprehend from us.

*Varn.* Surely not. Besides, when a man of well regulated feelings, and strict morality, enters a village where all around him breathes innocence and content, he would be a rascal to entertain a thought which—(*looking out*) there she is again.

*Ramb.* The angel we met as we came in, by all that's fortunate!

*Varn.* Pray, Tom, who is that charming creature?

*Tom. (aside)* Curse them, they have found her out! They mean my wife.

*Ramb.* Do you happen to know her name?

*Tom.* Her name! (*aside*) I think I may trust them with her name.—Why her name is Ellen.

*Ramb.* Does she live in this neighbourhood?

*Tom.* Y—es.

*Varn.* But, what is her Sirname?

*Ramb.* I dare say it is Simkins, or Hopkins, or some such damned common place name; Ellen is a sweet name, so don't spoil it by any addition.

*Varn.* She's charming!

*Ramb.* Angelic!

*Varn.* Exquisite!



*Ramb.* Divine! 'Tis unfortunate that I have determined upon reformation; for I feel a very strong inclination to carry her off.

*Varn.* For my part, I have never been in the habit of doing such things; or she should be fifty miles hence before midnight.

*Tom. (aside.)* I'm in a hopeful way here!

*Varn.* What a complexion!

*Ramb.* What eyes!

*Varn.* What a mouth!

*Ramb.* What teeth!

*Varn.* What a figure! what a *tout-ensemble*!  
*(aside)* I hope the Captain has no ill-intentions here.

*Ramb. (aside)* I hope Varnish doesn't mean to come across me. Unfortunately I am to be rendered a happy man to-morrow; but, if there had been time——

*Varn.* Time! Give me but half the time, and—  
Hem! I mean—that—Sir;—I understand you; and as a moral man, it is my duty to tell you that I think your intentions are——

*Ramb.* Very likely to interfere with your's. Come, damn it, Varnish, speak freely; what *are* your intentions. You know we are friends; and as there is nobody here but Tom, you may speak without restraint.

*Varn.* Well, then, I'll tell you. I should like to try my skill against your's in an exploit of gallantry. Now, though you are a man of acknowledged address in those affairs, and I, thanks to my moral habits, am not in the least accustomed to them, I'll bet you fifty pounds that I'll carry off that girl against you, before twelve o'clock to-night.

*Ramb.* Done—and Tom shall hold the stakes.

AN INTERLUDE.

*Varn.* Agreed; there, Tom. *(They put notes into Tom's hands.)*

*Tom.* *(aside)* And the devil take the winner.

*Ramb.* But hark'ee, Tom—Fair play! you must be neuter, you rogue; if you shew any preference, or give the least assistance to either of us, I've done with you for ever.

*Tom.* Depend upon strict impartiality from me, sir; for I do not particularly wish success to either of you. *(aside)* There may be danger in this joke; I'll end it at once—Gentlemen, I must just mention to you that that young woman was married but yesterday.

*Ramb.* Indeed! That gives ten thousand times more spirit to the thing. If the ass of a husband knew this, eh?

*Varn.* O; I dare say he is some stupid clod, who has not the taste to discover the beauty of a scheme like our's. Do you happen to know him, Tom?

*Tom.* I can't say but I have a sort of off-and-on acquaintance with him.

*Ramb.* No doubt he is some lubberly clown.

*Varn.* An ass, an ox, incapable of appreciating the value of such a creature as the charming Ellen.

*Tom.* Perhaps he is a dash or two better than that, Sir.

*Varn.* Ah! I see how it is; Tom is his friend, and will betray us.

*Ramb.* If he do, I'll blow his brains out; and as for the brute of a husband, if he should dare to thrust his unmannerly carcase in the way of my intentions, I'll see day-light through it in a twinkling. Tom knows my way of settling these matters; don't you, Tom?

*Tom.* Perfectly well, Sir; but as for the ass, the ox of a husband, depend upon it he shall know no more of the matter than he does at this moment.

*Ramb.* That's right, Tom; I thought we had better trust you in this affair than any one else.

*Tom.* I can't say but I think so too, Sir.

*Ramb.* Now for my room, Tom.

*Tom.* That's it, Sir. "The Wolf".—I'll shew Mr. Varnish into the "Fox."

*Ramb.* (*whispering*) Wait here, Tom; I want to speak to you. [*Exit to the Wolf.*]

*Varn.* (*Watches RAMBLETON into his room, and then returns gently*). He's safe.—Tom!

*Tom.* Sir.

*Varn.* I am afraid, the captain is relapsing into his former irregular habits.

*Tom.* I am afraid so too, Sir.

*Varn.* You see it is settled that one of us is to elope with this girl.

*Tom.* Clearly, Sir.

*Varn.* For Captain Rambleton, who is on the point of marriage, to do it, it would be highly improper; I will therefore sacrifice myself to save my friend, and though I am not in the habit of doing such things, carry her off myself.

*Tom.* Well, that's cool.

*Varn.* You see it is my duty to do it, for if I don't he will. You must therefore assist me; and the first service I desire of you is, to procure me an immediate interview with the little angel.

*Tom.* (*aside*) A comfortable job for me. But, consider, Sir, the night after her marriage—

*Varn.* True; that's unlucky; I'd rather it had been the night before.

*Tom.* But, Sir—

*Varn.* Psha! no objections—no difficulties—you must assist me. Here's for your pains. (*gives money*) Consider yourself as my second in this affair—mark me; *my* second, and rely upon my future generosity. [*Exit.*

*Tom.* Well, this is pleasant enough; a pretty situation I am in: bribed by that modest, moral gentleman, to assist him in running away with my own wife. Ha! ha! ha! I can't help laughing at the idea. If he had happened to bribe any body instead of me though! Uph! I'm in a fever at the thought of it. As it is there is not much to fear.

*Enter RAMBLETON looking cautiously about.*

*Ramb.* Tom.

*Tom.* Sir.

*Ramb.* Have you any regard for your old master?

*Tom.* Do you doubt it, Sir?

*Ramb.* I must have proof of it.

*Tom.* Any that you desire, Sir.

*Ramb.* You know where to find the charming Ellen; you must procure me an interview with her instantly.

*Tom.* But, Sir—consider—

*Ramb.* Pooh, nonsense! consider nothing. You did not use to find scruples on similar occasions. Here are five guineas (*gives notes and silver*) for your trouble.

*Tom.* (*looking at them*) Guineas! don't insult the memory of departed friends. However, as I am not a collector of scarce coins, this will do quite as well for me.

*Ramb.* Then I expect your assistance. But mark : my friend Varnish, I fear, is not a man of so strict honour as he pretends to be ; and though it is agreed that you are to be neuter, I shouldn't wonder if he were to endeavour to bribe you into his service.

*Tom.* No—do you think so, Sir?

*Ramb.* I do ; therefore, if he should, you will have honour enough to——

*Tom.* To remember that you bribed me first, and to give you the preference,

*Ramb.* Enough.

[*Exit.*

*Tom.* Enough ! quite enough in all conscience. Now what ought I to do ? I am well paid by both of them ; the arguments on both sides are pretty heavy ; now, as a conscientious man, which of them ought I to help to run away with my wife ? Good, it is very fortunate I have a liking for her myself, or my poor brains would be puzzled between them. Here comes Ellen,

*Enter ELLEN.*

*Ellen.* Well, my dear Thomas, what are you doing here ?

*Tom.* (*significantly*) Serving the customers, my dear,

*Ellen.* What, the two handsome gentlemen from London ?

*Tom.* Handsome !

*Ellen.* Those charming strangers,

*Tom.* Charming !

*Ellen.* Yes, charming—ha ! ha ! ha ! O Thomas, Thomas, how easily I can make you jealous. I do

really think you'd be jealous if I were even to speak well of my great grandfather.

*Tom.* Nonsense! I'm not jealous; but—I say, my dear; those handsome, charming gentlemen, are both desperately in love with you.

*Ellen.* No! are they indeed! what both? well now, I declare that's comical.

*Tom.* Why, yes; it is comical enough. (*aside*) It seems to please her. I'll tell her the rest, just to try her.

*Ellen.* (*aside*) I'll tease him. But you have no cause to be jealous, for all that, *husband*.

*Tom.* Not the least—*wife*; especially when they have betted fifty pounds that one of them will carry you off to-night; and without knowing me to be your *husband*, have each separately bribed me to procure them an interview with you.

*Ellen.* That is excellent: give me half the money, Thomas, and they shall have it.

*Tom.* Eh! the Devil!—This is too bad. I did take the money of them, to be sure; but it was with the intention of making them pay for their assurance, avowing myself your husband, and laughing at them.

*Ellen.* Well then, leave them to me, and they shall pay still dearer, and we will laugh at them still more.

*Tom.* No thank you—I'll put an end to the joke at once.

*Ellen.* What, will you never get rid of your jealous fancies? though you know you are always made ridiculous by them in the end.—Now leave those gallants to me; my credit is concerned in it, and I am determined to punish them. I suppose they take me for a silly country girl, and think themselves certain of success: but I'll shew them

that the cunning of our sex is not all confined to London; and that when a woman is determined to exercise her wits, whether in town or country, she is more than a match for any two men in christendom.

*Tom.* I don't know what to say to it; I don't like your appearing in it at all.

*Ellen.* Psha! I'll see them; you shall be present all the time, and hear all that passes; and that is more than many wives in my situation would allow.

*Tom.* Well, then——

*Ellen.* Hush! one of them is here.

*Enter VARNISH.*

*Varn.* So, here she is. Tom, I'm eternally obliged to you.

*Tom.* O don't mention it, Sir.

*Varn.* Lovely Ellen! I seize this happy opportunity to throw myself at your feet, and pay to your charms the tribute of admiration they demand.

*Ellen (aside).* You shall pay in a more useful coin before I've done with you.

*Varn.* Listen to me while, kneeling, I swear that your beauty has made an impression upon my heart, which time itself cannot efface. (*Aside*) See, Tom, she begins to melt.

*Tom.* What, the impression upon your heart?

*Varn.* Be quiet.—Receive, O dearest Ellen, receive my vows of the most ardent love, and of eternal constancy.

*Tom.* The old story, word for word.

*Ellen.* Well, sir, since you are so pressing, I'll go home and ask my husband leave.

*Varn. (aside).* Poor simple thing!—By no means: fly instantly from the clod to whom the cruelty of your parents has sacrificed you, and—

*Tom (with signs of uneasiness).* There, that will do.

*Varn.* Don't put me out, Tom.—Fly from the clod——

*Ellen.* But, Sir, you are mistaken: my husband is not a clod; and if he were not very jealous, I should have but little cause to find fault with him.

*Varn.* Jealous! O the immortal gods! I tremble to hear it! Jealous! then you owe it to your happiness to leave him instantly; you have not a moment to lose. Jealous! he will embitter every hour of your life.

*Ellen.* So I fear, Sir.

*Tom.* Damn it, don't set a woman against her husband!

*Varn.* Eh! Tom!

*Tom.* I—I mean, you'd better go now; he may surprise you, Sir.

*Varn.* I'll annihilate the cub.

*Ellen.* Pray leave me, Sir; if my husband should happen to find me here, with his disposition I can't answer for the consequences.

*Varn.* A sensible hint. What's to be done?—I have it:—Tom, go and keep a sharp watch outside the door.

*Tom.* I think I had better keep a sharp watch within, Sir.

*Ellen.* Now, Sir, I beg you'll leave me. Consider the time you have detained me.

*Varn.* To me it has not appeared an instant.

*Tom.* It has appeared plaguy long by my reckoning.



*Ellen.* Now indeed, Sir,—pray Sir— I insist upon your leaving me.

*Varn.* I leave you, then ; and let my obedience to your commands be the testimony of my affection. But I leave my friend Tom to prevail upon you to grant me another, and an early interview.

*Ellen.* Well, it all depends upon Tom now, Sir.

*Varn. (to Tom.)* Do you mark that ? I have done it ; she is over head and ears in love with me.—Pretty well for a beginning, eh ?

*Tom.* Nothing to complain of, Sir.

*Varn.* Would you advise me to say any more at present ?

*Tom.* I think you've said quite enough for once, Sir.

*Varn.* I'll imprint one tender kiss upon her lips, and——

*Tom. (detaining him).* Hold, Sir, hold ! Lord, how you frightened me !

*Varn.* What's the matter ?

*Tom.* Why—why—I heard somebody coming : Go, go. *[Forces him off.]*

*Varn.* Within an hour you shall congratulate me on my success. *[Exit.]*

*Ellen.* Ha ! ha ! ha ! Isn't this delightful, Thomas ?

*Tom. (forcing a laugh.)* Vastly agreeable indeed. But delightful as it is, I'll instantly put an end to it.

*Ellen.* There, you are flying off again ! Don't be jealous : it is evident those coxcombs think themselves irresistible ; leave the management of them to me, and I'll make them pay for the reliance they seem to have on their powers of pleasing :—I'll set a trap——

*Tom.* Which after all I may be caught in.

*Ellen.* Here comes the other. Now, quick—appear to be speaking to me in his favour.

*Tom.* I'll be hang'd first.

*Ellen.* Thomas, do as I desire; consider that with two lovers at my command, I have the means of punishing your disobedience.

*Tom.* Be careful, Ellen.

RAMBLETON *appears*:

*Ramb.* There she is. That Tom is a faithful fellow.

*Tom.* Hem! Indeed he only wishes a few minutes conversation with you. Can you refuse such a pretty man?

*Ramb.* What does he mean by pretty man?

*Ellen.* Indeed I'm sure he is one of your town gentlemen, and wants to take advantage of a poor country girl.

*Ramb. (coming forward)* Charming Ellen, do not suspect the integrity of my motives; believe me when I swear that I do not entertain a thought which is not intent upon your happiness.

*Ellen.* Sir, I must not listen to you.

*Ramb.* Would you then drive me to despair?

*Ellen.* O dear, I would not drive you any where—but I must leave you.

*Ramb.* Tom, say something for me.

*Tom.* Leave it to me.—Look at him, Ellen: Can you disoblige such a pretty man?

*Ramb.* Zounds! what do you mean by pretty man? Lovely Ellen, behold a humble suppliant at your feet; do not disdainfully reject his vows; do not cruelly suspect them to be the ebullitions of a wild intemperate passion; but believe them the sincere and fervent expressions of the most ardent and unbounded love.—That will do, Tom, eh?

*Tom.* It never failed yet, and you've tried it pretty often.

*Ellen.* But, Sir—I'm married.

*Tom.* I dare say that won't make any difference to the gentleman.

*Ramb.* Not the least; on the contrary it will contribute to my happiness to reflect that I have been the means of rescuing those charms from the power of a man who is unworthy of possessing them. Charms which would shed lustre on a coronet, and impart new dignity to the most exalted rank; charms——

*Tom.* That will do, Sir. He's going on too fast.

*Ramb.* Don't impede the torrent of my feelings.—Charms, which would shed—shed—hang it, you've put me out.

*Ellen.* Now, Sir, excuse me, I must be gone.

*Ramb.* What, already?

*Ellen.* My absence will be noticed, and my husband——

*Ramb.* O curse your husband, don't waste a thought upon him.

*Tom.* Curse him, by all means.

*Ellen.* Allow me, Sir, to quit you.

*Ramb.* Promise then to see me again within this half hour.

*Ellen.* I hardly know what to say; at all events—I—I cannot stay longer at present. [*Exit.*

*Ramb.* Huzza! victory! victory! Give me joy, Tom, give me joy; 'tis done;—did you notice her hesitation? Signs of surrender at the first attack.

*Tom.* Perhaps you'll find it only a *ruse de-guerre*, after all, Sir.

*Ramb.* No fear of that; I'm certain of success: in these matters I make it a rule always to succeed.

*Tom.* Indeed!

*Ramb.* You know my plan of carrying on the war: no ten years' sieges for me; Strike and conquer is my maxim. However, in this instance, I must confess I am not a little indebted to you for my success.

*Tom.* It is my duty to assist my old master.

*Ramb.* Say rather your interest. Stand by me till my victory is complete, and I'll be the making of you—I'll patronise your house—I'll make your "Horns" flourish, you dog!

*Tom.* That's some inducement.

*Ramb.* But I must follow up my success. To wait half an hour is impossible. I'll see her this moment; and to prevent her changing her mind, not allow her time for reflection. *[Exit.]*

*Tom.* Egad, then, I'll make one of the party.  
*(going).*

*Enter VARNISH.*

*Varn.* Here, Tom.

*Tom.* Hang him, he is here now—Sir.

*Varn.* You must deliver this letter for me instantly to my beloved Ellen.

*Tom.* His Ellen!

*Varn.* It contains a request that she will favour me with another interview, as I wish just to convince her of the impropriety of living with her husband.

*Tom.* But as the husband is but a simple subject, I am afraid you'll find it hard to convince him that it is wrong to live with his wife.

*Varn.* Not at all: it is a mere matter of taste.

*Tom.* But if it should be known that I have meddled in this business?

*Varn.* True; that might not be so well. Let me see:—you shall go with us, and I'll take you into our service.

*Tom.* And make me my wife's servant!

*Varn.* Now, Tom, as you know the oaf of a husband, it must be your task to keep him out of the way.

*Tom.* He'll no more attempt to interrupt you than I shall.

*Varn.* Ha, ha, ha! what a contemptible appearance he will make when it is known that his wife has eloped from him the day after their marriage. It will occasion a hearty laugh.

*Tom.* I expect it will—one way or other.

*Varn.* It will furnish an excellent paragraph for one of the fashionable London newspapers. "The following occurrence has been productive of considerable merriment in the upper circles. The accomplished Lord A. lately carried off the beautiful Lady B. the day after her marriage: the quiz of a husband has gone out of his mind in consequence."

*Tom.* Capital.

*Varn.* Or to give an exquisite relish to the joke, the husband might be described as a prig of a parson, who has no idea of a good thing.

*Tom.* But why not keep the credit of it, and let your own name appear.

*Varn.* It would be dangerous; being merely a plain *Mister*, I am protected from the accident of running away with other mens' wives; but great people, poor souls! are subject to such misfortunes.

*Tom.* Oh! ah!

*Varn.* Now, quick with my letter—but, mum, you rogue!

*Tom.* Mum's the word, Sir. (*Aside*) But I shall not trust Ellen with this letter. [*Exit*,

*Varn.* That is a clever intelligent fellow, and will help me to manage this little affair in a snug, quiet style. I hope Rambleton will not be before hand with me—Impossible! I've been too expeditious in my movements. However, I shall be

glad when I am safely off with the girl ; for these things, when they are long in preparation, leave one so much time for reflection, that there is great danger of one's reason getting the better of one's inclination. Well, thank heaven, I have too much regard for my moral reputation to—seek after Intrigues ; but when, like this, they thrust themselves upon me, what can I do ? She is here already ; that Tom is an invaluable second.

*Enter ELLEN.*

*Ellen.* Now to try whether the scheme I have arranged with Captain Rambleton will succeed as well with his friend here. (*Affecting surprise*) O Sir—I beg pardon—Is it you ? I didn't—

(*Going.*)

*Varn.* Do not attempt to fly from me, my charmer.—Has Thomas delivered my letter to you ?

*Ellen.* No, Sir ; and if he had, I hope you do not suppose I would have opened it.

*Varn.* And would you have had the cruelty to return it ?

*Ellen.* Where would have been the use of my reading it ? I dare say you merely repeat in it what you have already said to me, that I am a beautiful angel, and that you adore me, and I know not what else. Ah, Sir ! you London gentlemen have such a way of saying fine things, that I don't wonder that you so easily deceive us poor simple country girls—but you shan't deceive me, though !

*Varn.* Surely you do not suspect me of attempting to deceive you ?

*Ellen.* Indeed but I do ; else what do you mean by following me about, and asking to speak to me alone, when you know I'm married. I'm sure you can't mean any good by it ; besides, you

shan't make me believe that you are in love with me in so short a time.

*Varn.* To love you, needs but for an instant to behold you. Dearest Ellen, your suspicions are unkind—they are unjust. Can you suspect that I would betray into misery the being in whose happiness mine can alone exist?

*Ellen.* You talk so I hardly know how to answer you.

*Varn. (aside)* Now is my time. You must not hesitate; my happiness, nay, my life, is in your power, and I am determined to——

*Ellen.* Yes—I know what you are going to say; you'll get me separated from my husband, and then marry me yourself.

*Varn.* Marry you!

*Ellen.* O, you hesitate now.

*Varn. (aside)* She is up, I perceive: the old story, so I must humour it.—Marry you? O, certainly, it is my intention to marry you.

*Ellen.* Aye, but I mean in good earnest.

*Varn.* Surely, in good earnest; but we will keep the matter secret.

*Ellen.* No, indeed; I'll have it known; there is very little advantage in marrying a fine gentleman, except the pleasure of making our friends die of envy.

*Varn.* That is reasonable enough. Now, let us be gone.

*Ellen.* Must not I bid my husband good bye?

*Varn.* Why, I think you had better not: as he is an odd sort of a man, perhaps he may make some slight objections to your leaving him.

*Ellen.* Well, then, wait a little; night is drawing on; it will soon be quite dark—I'll then meet you here; and, to prevent discovery, will put on my husband's large riding coat, so that I may pass with you unsuspected.

*Varn.* An excellent idea!

*Ellen.* But not a word of it to your friend.

*Varn.* Not a syllable: I'll just mention it to Tom; he can have a chaise ready for us at the end of the village.

*Ellen.* By no means; Tom has done as much for us as we ought to expect. Leave all the rest to me.

*Varn.* I rely on you, my little divinity, with confidence.

*Ellen.* Retire—quick! I hear some one coming.

*[Exit VARNISH. The stage gradually darkens.]*  
Well, they may say what they will of their town gentlemen, but I do believe, that with a little management, we country girls are a match for the best of them. They, thinking to find us all ignorance and simplicity, are exposed to every artifice we choose to practice upon them: while we, aware of their deceptions, and expecting their attacks, are prepared to oppose them.

*Enter TOM.*

Well, Thomas, it is all settled.

*Tom.* Settled! What's settled?

*Ellen.* I'm going off; but as a proof of my affection for you, I have waited to say, good-bye.

*Tom.* Here's a shameless baggage!—May I be so bold as to inquire which is to be the happy man?

*Ellen.* At present they are both happy men, for they are both confident of success; but as you have been at some pains to effect this matter, I'll leave the choice to you.

*Tom.* Vastly kind! What other proof of your affection?—Zounds! I'll not bear this—I'll raise the village! I'll—

*Ellen.* Hold!—Don't be in a passion; you have no one to thank for this but yourself. Had you told them at once I was your wife, this would not have happened; but, as it is, it will teach you



that the jealous man, while he is needlessly anxious to secure his happiness, often lays the foundation of his own misery.

*Tom.* It is partly my own fault, I confess ; but that is no excuse for you, and I am determined—

*Ellen.* Determine to dismiss your jealous fears for ever, and to rely on my affection with the confidence it deserves, and I'll tell you——

*Tom.* What ?

*Ellen.* That this is all a jest—the last part of my scheme to expose those coxcombs, and my first attempt to convince you that whenever you are seized with a jealous fit, I have art enough to punish you for it.

*Tom.* O, my dear Ellen, you have taken a great weight off my heart. What a fool I was to believe it !

*Ellen.* Well, there ; I forgive you. Both my lovers will be here presently, expecting to find me muffled up in your great coat, each fancying himself the favoured man.—Now come with me and follow my directions.

*Tom.* I'll never doubt you again—no, not even though I was sure you had deceived me. [*Exeunt.*

*The stage quite dark. Enter VARNISH, speaking in a low voice.*

*Varn.* I thought I heard her ; no, but 'tis quite dark, and she will soon be here. Ha ! ha ! ha ! How confoundedly surprized Rambleton will be when he discovers that I have carried the fortress while he is planning his attack. He's a strange fellow ! He talks of reformation ; but I fear he remains a profligate dog at the bottom. If I had not been too quick for him he would have carried off that young creature from the arms of an affectionate husband. The morality of some people is to me unintelligible !

*Enter TOM, muffled up in a large riding coat, and RAMBLETON, at opposite sides.*

*Tom.* Hist ! hist !

*Ramb.* I hear her ! there she is !

*Varn.* Now to carry her off in triumph !

*Ramb.* It is so cursed dark ! where the devil are you, my angel ?

*Varn.* What voice was that ?

*Tom.* Hist ! hist !

*(RAMBLETON and VARNISH walk cautiously about, and at last they each take one of TOM's hands.)*

*Varn.* My charming Ellen ! let us begone.

*Ramb.* What, Varnish ! come, come, you may as well go to bed peaceably, for you see the prize is mine.

*Varn.* Pooh ! nonsense ! I'm here by appointment ; am I not, my beloved ?

*Ramb.* No trifling now ; 'tis *I* am here by appointment. Is it not true, my Ellen ?

*Varn.* Speak !

*Ramb.* Aye, speak. What, no answer ! I'm afraid we are both jilted.

*Varn.* I'm afraid so too. If we are to be exposed, may I die but this little baggage shall make one of the party.

*Ramb.* Lights ! lights, here !

*Enter ELLEN, with light.*

*Ellen.* Did you call, gentlemen ?

*Ramb.* What, Ellen !

*Varn.* Who have we here, then ? Hoa ! Tom !

*Tom.* *(throwing open his coat)* Here, gentlemen, at your service.

*Ramb.* Zounds ! Tom !

*Ellen.* Heavens! my husband! (*affecting surprise*)

*Varn.* How, Tom your husband?

*Ramb.* So then, Mr. Tom, after all it seems you are the——

*Tom.* No, but I had very nearly been—the ox, the ass of a husband. Can I render you any further assistance, gentlemen? Ha! ha! ha!

*Ellen.* Ha! ha! ha!

*Ramb.* Fire and fury! We are completely taken in!—If this little adventure should be known, we shall be laughed at by all the boors in the country—

*Varn.* And lampooned by all the bores in town. However, I hope Tom does not suspect me of any real intention to—

*Ramb.* Sink that, Varnish;—and as this is certainly a drawn bet, we cannot do better than make Tom a present of the stakes as a reward for his—*services*.—An immeasurable rascal!

*Varn.* With all my heart.

*Tom.* And with all my heart; and I shall always feel happy to give you my assistance—upon the same terms.

*Ramb.* But upon one condition, Tom—Mum!

*Tom.* Depend upon my secrecy, gentlemen.

*Ramb.* And to shew you how easily we men of the world can bear a good joke, though at our own expense, we'll remain here and finish the evening with the new-married couple.

*Varn.* And I'll take an opportunity of whispering a few words on the duties of the married state to the amiable Ellen—a jilting baggage!

*Ellen.* Any thing you please, gentlemen, provided you will, as usual, allow my husband to be in the secret.

FINIS.





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